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BRITAIN'S FLEET STILL FORMIDABLE

Disclosures In Commons

European Union Pact Now Half Completed

Brussels, Mar. 8.—The world's four greatest colonial powers and Luxembourg on Monday completed more than half the articles of a pact binding them into a military and economic core of the 16 Marshall Plan powers.

This was reported amid growing excitement that the foreign ministers of Britain, France, Belgium, The Netherlands and Luxembourg might come to Brussels to sign the pact before the 16 powers meet next week. The jobbers of the Foreign Affairs Ministry were thronged on Monday with a record assembly of correspondents pouring in from abroad as it was learned that the Western Union was assuming ever greater importance with each new step in the conference. "What we are doing is a historic agreement (of the three low countries last year) we had not foreseen that things would move so far," Luxembourg's Government Counsellor Pierre Elvinger said.

ECONOMIC QUESTIONS

Monday's session dealt with economic questions which it had first been supposed the conference might not even come to discuss. British Press Attache Stephen Lockhart, as Conference spokesman said they had been "set aside" at the beginning of the Conference last week.

It was understood these were raised by the Benelux countries as their counterpart to the political and military Western Union first proposed by British Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin. They will tend to draw the signatories closer together into a vast field of economic energy in which the dynamism of the industrial low countries will be felt. The conference reached the stage where it was able to elect a drafting committee and refer to it what will be the six or seven articles of the treaty. The treaty was expected to have about a dozen articles, Lockhart said.

IMPORTANT PREAMBLE

The preamble still remained to be tackled, and delegates attached great importance to it. They already had agreed that it would contain a statement of principles which would automatically exclude any totalitarian power. The question of the colonies also still lay largely ahead. Defence of one another's colonies was not expected to be agreed on by the mother countries in the commitments for joint protection of the homelands.—Associated Press.

Home Fleet To Cruise

London, Mar. 8.—The Admiralty announced yesterday that the British Home Fleet will visit the West Indies next autumn and call at "other British possessions in the area."

Making the announcement in the House of Commons, the Admiralty Financial Secretary, Mr. John Dugdale, did not specify the exact ports of call. British Honduras, now subject of a territorial dispute with neighbouring Guatemala, is situated about a day's cruise from the Indies.

Two British cruisers, the Sheffield and the Devonshire were sent to Belize, the Honduras capital, last week after the longstanding territorial dispute with Guatemala blazed up anew.

Mr. Dugdale said that the Fleet would engage in manoeuvres and would return to Britain in early December.

He said the composition of the fleet was not yet decided but it would probably consist of the battleship Duke of York, the third aircraft carrier squadron, the second cruiser squadron, two flotillas of destroyers and a fleet replenishment ship.—Associated Press.

Lab "Rebels" Weaken

Two Withdraw Names From Amendment

London, Mar. 8.—Two Labour Members of Parliament today withdrew their support of a weekend move to challenge the Government's bill covering the withdrawal from Palestine.

Mr. Ian Mikardo, a Labour Member of Parliament, disclosed last night that he and fellow Members intended to stage a "revolt" when the Palestine bill came before the House of Commons next Wednesday.

It was later reported that nine Labour Members had signed a motion to reject the Government's bill.

Two of the nine, Mr. T. C. Skeffington-Lodge and Mr. W. H. Ayres, explained, when they withdrew today, that they had signed the motion because they felt it would be a good thing to have a comprehensive debate on the Palestine issues.

As the motion has been construed as a revolt against the Government, they no longer wished to be associated with it.—Reuter.

GOVT. CRITICISED

London, Mar. 8.—Britain today has "a formidable fleet, second only in size to the United States," Mr. John Dugdale, the Financial Secretary to the Admiralty, said this in the House of Commons today in reply to recent criticism of the size and effectiveness of the Royal Navy.

"Except for battleships, where we certainly have fewer than before the war, we have today as many ships of each class as we had in an average prewar year," he declared. By December, the Royal Navy hoped to have in commission four battleships, three fleet carriers, five light fleet carriers, 17 cruisers, 34 submarines, 52 destroyers and 43 frigates.

Mr. Dugdale was speaking in a debate on the Navy Estimates for the next financial year, which at £153 million, are £43,700,000 less than for the current year. Referring to the "great development" in destroyers, he said that the improvement was so great that Britain's 24 newest destroyers had a comparable armament to prewar light cruisers.

On the decision to scrap five old battleships, Mr. Dugdale said: "It would be stupid to keep them on now, using money and manpower to preserve them as souvenirs to be scrapped at the outbreak of another war and probably sunk within a few days."

"We mean to see that any admirals who may have to fight a war, be it in five, 10, 15 or even 50 years time, will be certain of having the most up-to-date weapons with which to wage it," Mr. Dugdale declared.

"For that reason, we are proposing to spend about £20 million on research," he said, "into the effects of the atom bomb on war at sea."

The protection of crews from atomic bomb effects was receiving great attention. One of the most active contingencies was the radioactive contamination of a ship caused by a nearby detonation.

"SNORT" EQUIPMENT

Future submarines would have the "snort" equipment for taking in fresh air by a system which enabled the British submarine Alliance to make a trip of 3,000 miles submerged the whole time.

The Admiralty was also investigating alternative methods of submarine propulsion, including those initiated in Germany. The development of the gas turbine engine for marine propulsion was still in its infancy. If successful, it would revolutionise the whole of naval warfare and merchant shipping.

Referring to the increase in the fleets of the Dominions, Mr. Dugdale declared: "We cannot today consider the Royal Navy in isolation, alone, responsible for the defence of the Commonwealth."

"A great and growing body of ships and men, has come to join us and to form a bulwark of strength to the British Commonwealth of Nations." Canada now had a far larger fleet than before the war. The two new Dominions of India and Pakistan, each decided to have navies of their own. India's would include a cruiser and several destroyers.

In the colonial empire, Malaya had "shown a fine example" by the decision reached in January to create its first permanent naval force. Proposals for the establishment of naval forces were being considered in other colonies.

CHURCHILL'S CRITICISM

Mr. Winston Churchill, leader of the Opposition, said the efficient administration in the fighting services had sunk to its lowest level and there was no one in the Government who had the vital grip to restore the situation.

The announcement that Britain had only one cruiser and four destroyers in the Home Fleet caused a great shock throughout the whole free democratic world, he said. "Britain has always floated upon her navy. Our great Indian Empire has gone down one drain and now the Admiralty proclaim that the great British Home Fleet has gone down another."

"Can you wonder," he asked, amid laughter, "that you are checked by



PRESIDENT PAASIKIVI

Commons To Probe Allegations

"Secret Supporters" Of Communist Party

London, Mar. 8.—The House of Commons today ordered its Committee of Privileges to investigate the publication by the Daily Mail of allegations that some Members of Parliament were "secret supporters" of the Communist Party.

Mr. Francis George Bowles, a Labour Member, drew the attention of the House of Commons to the published statement which, he said, meant, in effect, that 29 Members of Parliament were traitors and secret agents of what he described as "a future enemy power."

The Speaker of the House ruled that there was a prima facie case of a breach of privilege and the matter was then referred to the Committee for investigation.

Mr. Bowles read to the House of Commons the text of the report which stated that British radio listeners had heard the author, Mr. C. Brogan, suggest that secret sessions of Parliament were useless as "secret agents of a potential enemy" would be present.

THE DANGER

Mr. Brogan was quoted as telling a reporter: "I know that any defence information would be given to the Russians. The secret supporters of the Communist Party are the danger, not the open ones."

"I don't think Mr. William Gallacher (A Communist Member of Parliament) would do it, for instance. But I understand that 29 of these secret supporters are in the House."

Mr. Bowles commented: "It seems to me to be very much more serious to suggest that Members of Parliament will give away any secrets they hear at secret sessions than that a Member might give away, under the influence of drink or for money, secrets of a Party meeting."

This appeared to be an allusion to cases last year in which the Committee of Privileges found two Members guilty of a breach of privilege because they divulged money secrets at meetings of the Parliamentary Labour Party.—Reuter.

Finland To Negotiate Pact With Russia

DELEGATION FOR MOSCOW

Helsinki, Mar. 8.—The Finnish Government decided today to accept Marshal Stalin's recent offer to negotiate a Finnish-Russian pact of friendship and mutual assistance. A Finnish delegation will go to Moscow shortly to open talks.

A statement issued by the Finnish Foreign Office tonight said: "The President of the Republic has today in the State Council decided to reply in the affirmative to the Soviet Government's proposal to enter into negotiations with a view to the conclusion of a pact of friendship and mutual assistance and to propose that these negotiations take place in Moscow."

Finland's reply came 11 days after Marshal Stalin first made his proposals for a friendship and mutual assistance pact. Differences arose, it was learned, over the place where the negotiations were to be held.

PRIVATE DISAPPROVAL
The Finnish President, M. Paasikivi, preferred Helsinki, where the Finnish delegation would be in closer touch with the Government and Parliament, who must be consulted before Finland can constitutionally agree to any pact.

Some members of the Social Democratic Party have privately expressed disapproval of the negotiations taking place in Moscow on the ground that the Finns may be confronted with the text of a treaty and be given no opportunity to negotiate modifications.

There have been hints in the past few days that Finland would want modification of the proposed pact by Marshal Stalin and would not be prepared to accept the Russian treaties with Hungary and Rumania as an exact model.

A Finnish Foreign Office spokesman said tonight Finland's reply had not yet been sent to Marshal Stalin.

He would not confirm that the reply would make the same points as were included in today's official statement.

The Finnish Foreign Office communiqué followed an hour's meeting today of the Government's Foreign Affairs Committee of six Ministers, followed by a full meeting of the Cabinet, presided over by the Finnish President, which lasted nearly two hours.

The Social Democrats support the principle of negotiating with Russia, but in a manifesto published last week, described such negotiations as "against the will of the majority of the Finnish people."

LIKELY DELEGATES
The composition of the Finnish delegation will be decided at another Cabinet meeting tomorrow. It is likely to consist of three or four Ministers and three Members of Parliament representing the People's Democrats, the Social Democrats and the Finnish People's parties.

The Ministers strongly tipped as delegates are Mr. Mauno Pekkala, Prime Minister, Mr. Yrjö Leino, Minister of the Interior, both People's Democrats, and Mr. Carl Enckell, the Foreign Minister, an Independent.

The entire Finnish press, with the exception of organs voicing the views of the People's Democrat Party, is expressing misgivings about the negotiations. Newspaper administrations say they will make every effort to secure visas for reporters to cover the negotiations.

A Finnish Foreign Office spokesman, asked if Finnish journalists applying for visas for Moscow would receive official Finnish backing, said he could make no comment.—Reuter.

Arab Leader Draws Up Battle Plan

(BY SEAGHAN MAYNES)

At the Samaria mountain headquarters of the "Arab Liberation Army," Mar. 8. Battle plans for the Arab Liberation Army's war against the Jews in Palestine were drawn up tonight in this closely guarded mountain-top village, now serving as temporary headquarters of the Arab Commander-in-Chief, Fawzi Bey Kawukji, who crossed into Palestine from Syria with armoured cars and jeeps mounted with machine guns.

The Arab Commander-in-Chief tonight got down to work with his local commanders, pointing over maps and receiving intelligence reports on the strength, armament and personnel of Jewish settlements against which the full force of his trained men, with modern weapons, will be thrown when the battle plans are put into action.

When I reached the mountain headquarters after passing through several check points and road blocks manned by disciplined Arab uniformed troops, Kawukji told me: "Our men will be ordered into action when the battle plans are completed."

All day and night, endless streams of vehicles have been churning up the mud on the partly flooded mountain roads, following the torrential rain.

Arab guerrilla chiefs, in Arab headresses and various types of battle dress, surrounded by armed escorts, are converging on the headquarters to receive instructions on points and the dispositioning of the forces for all-out attacks.—Reuter.

EDITORIAL

Antarctic Strategy

THE hostile moves by the Argentina and Chile to deprive Britain of her sovereignty over the Falkland Islands dependencies may, on the surface, strike a comic opera note, but it would be a mistake to dismiss the establishment of alien bases on Deception and Greenwich Islands as frivolous in intention. Superficially the islands in dispute are unimportant, but when considered geographically they merit serious attention. The first overt moves leading to the present developments was the despatch by the Argentina, and then Chile, of so-called scientific and meteorological expeditions to Antarctica, and, not without significance, Soviet Russia has, for the second year in succession, sent to the same area a whaling expedition. The research missions of the two South American nations, however, have developed into belligerent and political gestures, with Argentina establishing a military outpost on Deception Island, and the President of Chile, doing likewise on Greenwich Island. Ostensibly both countries have made big play of their "historical and moral" claims to sovereignty in Antarctica—claims which, in the light of world developments, are steadily eroding. The geographical importance of the Antarctic islands cannot be ignored. To the naval powers of the Atlantic and Pacific they are the strategic link between the tip of South America and the Antarctic Continent, with the Straits of Magellan offering a possible alternative to the Panama

Canal: to the naval powers of the Indian Ocean, Antarctica is vital as a protection of an alternative to the Great Circle air route from Britain, through South Africa, across the Antarctic fringe of the Indian Ocean to Western Australia. These are geographical considerations which, as much as anything else, make it necessary for Britain to retain her foothold in Antarctica. It is reasonable to assume other aspects, such as the strategic importance of these islands in connection with atomic rocket weapons, which are certain to be used in any future war of world dimensions. Australia is the natural experimental ground for these rockets, but should the traditional air links with Britain, across southeast Asia, India and the Middle East be cut, an alternative route must be found. The Antarctic commands itself. Moreover the British Commonwealth's desire to take every reasonable safeguard on these lines is further indicated by the recent despatch of meteorologists to Heard Island, roughly halfway between Australia and South Africa, and about ten degrees north of the Antarctic Circle, and the sending of South African parties to the Marion and Prince Edward Islands, a few miles north of Heard Island. There is every indication, therefore, that the sudden interest of the Argentinians and Chile in the Falkland dependencies is based on something more than national pride or historical precedent. It is part of the so-called "cold war" to gain strategical advantages.

ORGY OF PLUNDER AND LOOTING IN YEMEN'S CAPITAL

Cairo, Mar. 8.—An orgy of plunder and looting is going on in Sanaa, the mountain capital of the Yemen, according to reports reaching here from various sources in the Arabian peninsula.

The reports indicated that the situation had grown worse in The Yemen, where the 85-year old Imam Yahya was recently assassinated and where civil war is reported between Emir Self El Imam, Ahmed, the eldest son of the Imam, and the first-born old chieftain, Sayed Abdullah El Wazir.

Sayed El Wazir was said to have appealed to King Ibn Saud of Saudi Arabia, who last week announced his intention to send a mission to deal with the Bedouin looters in the capital.

The appeal said the Bedouins who support neither faction in the dispute were taking advantage of the troubled situation to attack property in the old walled city of Sanaa, where they believed fabulous wealth, attributed to the late Imam and to the country, might be hidden.

MISSION DELAYED
The appeal was taken to King Ibn Saud by a three-man delegation which went to Riyadh, the Saudi Arabian capital.

The "Arab League" mission, which has gone to investigate conditions in The Yemen, has been held up at

blinded by the illness of its leader, Abdul Rahman Azman, the Secretary General, who has influenza.

El Wazir's delegation is reported to be urging the Arab League mission to continue its journey to Sanaa as soon as possible, "before the situation becomes too critical."

In Cairo, it was stated that the Egyptian Government has decided to remain neutral in the present dispute in The Yemen, pending a full report from the mission.—Reuter.

PRINCE'S STATEMENT

Paris, Mar. 8.—Prince Abdullah, issuing a statement to the press as chief of the Yemen delegation to the United Nations and general representative abroad, said his father's policy had always been to prevent any foreign interference in the affairs of his country and to refuse all concessions.

"This policy was bound to be disrupted by the creation of trouble in the country would provide them with the opportunity of realising their objectives. It was difficult to foment trouble as long as his late Majesty was alive."

He described the murderers of his father as "a band of assassins."

The legitimate king, our great brother, Ahmed, is strengthening his forces every day and every hour."

he added: "Soldiers outraged by the horrible crime at Sanaa are rallying round him, who is the legitimate heir to the throne, to avenge their Imam, our late father, who is mourned by his people and by the Arab world."

DELIVERANCE PROMISE

Prince Abdullah said his brother now had his headquarters at Hajja, in the north of the country.

He would shortly make "a triumphant entry into the capital of The Yemen and deliver it from the assassins."

The prince added that when order was restored, a charter would be established, under which all representatives of the nation would collaborate in a policy of friendship with all countries.

"It is obvious that we shall give preference to our Arab brothers and, after that, to those countries who show no imperialism in regard to us."

"With the Koran in one hand and the sword in the other and progress as his object, His Majesty, our great brother, the Imam Ahmed, will restore order, and reconquer the capital from the looters and criminals, and the people of The Yemen will once again find peace and security for its noble aspirations."—Reuter.

STOP PRESS
MacArthur's
Decision
Tokyo, Mar. 8.—General Douglas MacArthur today said that he would run for President if nominated.—United Press.

C.V.R. Thompson IDEALS TO ORDER

NEW YORK. A BOOKLET on how not to be mistaken for a Communist is Hollywood's best-seller today. It is called Screen Guide for Americans, and is published by the Motion Picture Alliance for the Preservation of American Ideals.

This Right-wing organization was founded by, among others, Ginger Rogers' mother. The booklet lists these don'ts for film makers: Don't smear the free enterprise system; don't deify the common man; don't glorify failure; don't smear industrialists; don't permit any disparagement of personal success; don't give to your characters—as a sign of villainy—a desire to make money.

WHILE stars and producers are preoccupied with their advice, Hollywood's own "little people," the extras, 2,000 of whom have not had work for six months, are earning a living in the orange groves as pickers.

PRESIDENT TRUMAN, who is on holiday in the tropics, is greeted everywhere with his favourite tune, "The Missouri Waltz." But at home the tune might well be "Everyone's Wild About Harry."

To the Jews, the Left-wingers, and the Tories, there must now be added Truman's own lieutenants. For there is nothing talk within his Democrat Party. "Truman is going to lose us this election," grumble such stalwart White House supporters as Senator Alben Barkley and ex-Speaker Samuel Rayburn.

FRANK SINATRA, the crooner, has made £2,500,000 in the past five years, but he is so broke that his manager is making him live on £25 a week.

WALL STREET is going on strike. Not the brokers, of course, but the clerks and telephone operators who make it possible for millions to change hands every day. They want their average wage of £10 a week increased to £12 10s. The Exchange says they haven't a chance.

AMERICA'S official weather prophets, using traditional methods, have missed forecasting every big snow this winter. George MacCormack, an amateur who predicts weather by the behaviour of planets, forecast last September the winter's three big falls—December 26, January 24, February 22.

TRAVEL: A survey of a cross-section of prospective American tourists to Britain and elsewhere in Europe this summer shows that 40 percent of them want, above all else, "efficient and courteous service," and that 32 percent want "very good food."

COMIC STRIP: New York State is considering a Bill to control some comic strips, because "they use bad grammar and are immoral, bold, vicious, and contributing factors to juvenile delinquency."

OPINION: Writing a guest column for Leonard Lyons, James Mason says that anyone criticising Hollywood films is really paying America a compliment. His argument: "Real Americans talk to each other like grown-ups and do things; Hollywood's Americans are the victims of 'enforced banality.'"

PROHIBITION does not work, even when it is juke-boxes which are banned. Five years ago Alabama State outlawed the penny gramophone in all pubs. They drove people to drink, they argued, and increased juvenile delinquency, crime, and immorality.

Today the board which banned the juke-box admitted that drinking had increased, and that "juke-eaters" where Bing, Sinatra, and Benny Goodman can be heard in a beery atmosphere have been opened in every town. It lifted the ban.



FALKLAND ISLAND FOLLIES

PERON 'REVOLUTIONS MUST EXPAND'

By Charles Foley

ELECTION politics transferred to a world stage is the reason why General Peron, Argentine President, has found it necessary to challenge Britain by trespassing in force among our Antarctic islands.

There is trouble at home. The classic way of dealing with internal strife is to pick a noisy quarrel out of doors. What better than a naval parade in the Antarctic, with newsreel cameras behind the guns and a

stirring radio broadside from every ship?

But behind the roll of Latin oratory now moving on Decan Island there are sharp realities.

First meet Peron, the would-be fuhrer of the western world, as his enemies call him.

Five years ago he took a torn shirt and tied it to a pole; here was a symbol for the "descamisados," the

"shirtless ones," the ill-paid working masses and the destitute.

With a storm of oratory he swept rival parties off the board, and within three years he had reached the presidential palace.

In the Pink House, or Casa Rosada, of Buenos Aires the handsome rabble-rouser, still barely 50, showed himself a man of heady visions. It was not enough to have "arrived," the revolution must "expand in time and space."

Abruptly he tore the Argentine from the South American "sleaze." His neighbours might be richer in minerals, but gold and silver veins were first in the endless green pampas which, in a hungry world, feeds more cattle and many more sheep than there are people in England, then in a golden flood of wheat and in a rapid industrialisation, to which British capital in the past has contributed £600,000,000.

The master

PERON saw this; he also saw himself master of the only all-white population south of Canada. He launched his plan to give them guns and butter too.

The millionaires and cattle barons lost their fear of the "shirtless ones" who rode round in Cadillacs. Congress was mastered the Press was cowed.

The Supreme Court was liquidated because it was not "sympathetic" to the regime. The universities lost 1,500 students who would not teach the Peron brand of learning.

Each such stroke is counterbalanced by a sop for "the shirtless." There were compulsory price cuts of 17 per cent in rents, up to 50 per cent in clothing, and to the joy of film-crazy "descamisados"—20 per cent in cinema seats. His film star wife, Eva Peron, receives workers' delegations, and authentic Nell Gwynn touch—delights them with stories of her humble past.

Of course there is Five Year Plan to end "desertic liberalism" in economics, just as Peron's own so-

called Labour Party has superseded the "warring faction" of an independent Labour movement.

Miguel Miranda who led us a rumba over the meat-for-railways treaty, is the Argentine's Dr Schacht, buying cheap all over the country and selling abroad to the highest bidder. Profits of this trading machine pay for the Five Year Plan, for railways, factories, and dams.

The best navy

THERE is something over to play power politics abroad.

Already Peron has the best navy, the strongest army, and the most modern air force in the Western Hemisphere after the United States. He has drawn Uruguay and Chile into his economic sphere.

He has cornered Bolivia's tin for his smelting works, the most up to date in the world. He has visited Brazil to win President Dutra over for a pan-American bloc.

The royal welcome accorded to his actress wife by Franco was a great prestige coup for Peron in South America, while even the new democracy in Chile had to make a plea for her slender beauty when it was accompanied with a loan of £30,000,000.

"A revolution must expand or die," and though the day when the Pink House shakes the White House may never come, General Peron is on the way.

Until a year ago the U.S. policy was to build up an anti-Peron front, but since then Mr Marshall has had a long hard look round a hard world and decided that while the Russian bear is roving he cannot afford to leave a hole in America's hemispherical defence.

P.S.: But what, you ask, is peaceful Chile thinking of to send her President down to the Antarctic in defiance of our "No trespass" signs? Is this a move concerted with the Argentine?

Not so. Even in Chile a politician must live—and why should that man Peron have all the limelight, anyhow?

1948 IS BRITAIN'S 5-FESTIVAL YEAR

MUSIC lovers from overseas who are visiting Britain this year will be able to enjoy a brilliant festival programme. Throughout the summer months, five major events are being staged which will offer to the discriminating the best in music and drama.

The first International Festival held in Edinburgh has already established this beautiful and historical capital as a focal point in the musical world. Again this year a galaxy of conductors, orchestras, soloists—as well as stars of opera, ballet and theatre of international renown are offering a crowded programme. Once more during August, Edinburgh will transform itself into a gay cosmopolitan "city," reminiscent of the memorable pre-war festivals.

Preliminary announcements indicate that this year's attractions will be of an even more ambitious character than last year. They will gain added interest from celebration centenary of Chopin's visit to the city.

THIS year's innovation is an assembly at the famous town of Bath, still to be seen. It is designed to introduce children and parents to that unique combination of art in a historic and beautiful setting with a ceremonial which gives a festival its particular character. An attractive event will be a period costume ball to be held in the Pump Rooms. The novel feature of this assembly, being held in April, will be a conference to discuss special problems of introducing young people to the arts.

The annual Shakespeare season, which is Britain's greatest national festival of the theatre, will again be held in the immortal playwright's birthplace. It extends from April to October, and this year an outstanding cast of players has been assembled. Last year this event attracted a record number of 238,000 visitors. Audiences were representative of no less than 52 different countries.

Another dramatic festival honours Britain's greatest living playwright, whose plays are translated into all

most every language. What Stratford-on-Avon is to Shakespeare, Malvern is to Bernard Shaw. This festival is also a delightful social occasion. Not only is there a different play each night to enjoy but also garden parties, tea-time talks, Sunday concerts and an attractive club where visitors may meet. The great dramatist, whose 92nd birthday the festival will specially honour, is writing a new play specifically for the event.

Britain's lovely cathedral city of Canterbury will be the scene of yet another festival of music. This has long been established as one of the outstanding events of the year in Britain.

Finally, choral music will be particularly well represented at Three Choirs Festival at Worcester. Britain's finest choirs will perform a widely varied programme of choral masterpieces.

JOHN GRIERSON

UNESCO'S Director of mass communication and public information, Mr. John Grierson, is to control film activities of Britain's Central office of information. He will supervise planning, distribution and production of all films prepared by the British Government. He will take up this new appointment next month.

Although he will vacate his present post with UNESCO, Mr. Grierson will continue to work for the organisation in a voluntary capacity; medium for dissemination of public information.

Mr. Grierson's name has become internationally famous through his inspired handling of cinema recording of facts and problems of daily life from a purely realistic angle. This technique of the factual film of documentary has been termed Britain's outstanding contribution to cinema. It was Mr. Grierson who in 1929 initiated this new approach to the screen and gave it its name.

Speaking in London recently he suggested that one of the reasons for success of Britain's documentary films was that they had given the citizen a real picture of the modern world. The great task for the future he outlined as giving to international relations the same vitality and substance that had been given to national questions in the past.

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AT 12.30, 2.30, 5.15, 7.15 & 9.15 P.M.

A NEW "DAY OF INFAMY" GOES DOWN IN "HORROR" HISTORY!

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TO-MORROW THE SECRET A MILLION KEPT!

Ralph RICHARDSON Raymond HUNTLEY in "School for Secrets"

NANCY Robin Hood, 1948



BY THE WAY by Beachcomber

"CAN joy kill?" asks a morning paper. It can certainly hurt. When Legendre, the geometrician, was given the Legion of Honour, he went home and jumped so high for joy that he banged his head on the ceiling and was knocked out.

A friend remarked "Had he killed himself, it would have been a death worthy of the successor of Archimedes."

And now? I come to think of it. Baudin, a member of the Council of Ancients under the Directory, was said to have dropped dead from joy when told in 1799 that Bonaparte had come back from Egypt and was the man chosen by Sieyès to get rid of the Government.

Mimsie Slopcorner

MR. T. CLEVERLEY GRAM-POUND, the amorous Mayor of Sopping Overcoat, will be Father Christmas in his native town. He has written to Mimsie Slopcorner suggesting that she should be the Sopping Overcoat Fairy Queen in the toy department of Mobbie and Grit-naway. "All you will have to do," writes, "is to stop the children touching the clockwork mice, wave your wand when it's time to put the lights on, and pretend to change my reindeer into a foudstool."

Mrs Wretch refuses

WUGWELL has asked Mrs Wretch if she would be willing to join his circus for a month as Queen of the See-Saw. He would engage the Persians, and all she would have to do would be to walk up and down with a Japanese sunshade while the

Trio did their act. He received an indignant refusal.

A daring innovation

THE first chess match to be played on skulls underneath a skating rink will be broadcast next Tuesday in the Grotto Hour, with a crawling commentary by a man in a diving helmet, travelling 300 miles an hour in a plane 10,000 feet up. The moves will be radioed to him by an actress.

The cabmen again

A NEW edition of the "List of Huntingdonshire Cabmen" has made its appearance. By adhering to alphabetical order the compilers give the lie to any criticism of undemocratic bias which might be made. Nobody who wants to know the names and initials of every cabman in Huntingdonshire can afford to be without this standard work.



EXTENSIVE MILITARY AID TO NANKING FORECAST

BY STEWART HENSLEY

Washington, Mar. 8.—Informed sources predicted today that the United States within the next few months will become committed to supplying considerable military aid to Chiang Kai-shek's government despite the fact that the State Department is against such a course.

Two Fleets In Singapore

Singapore, Mar. 8.—Two fleets, one British and one American, arrived here today and anchored together in the gutter roads.

Admiral Sir Denis Boyd, Commander-in-Chief of the British Pacific Fleet, came from a visit to Saigon, flying his flag in the 10,000-ton cruiser London, with three destroyers in company.

The 27,000-ton United States aircraft carrier Valley Forge arrived flying the flag of Rear-Admiral Martin, commanding United States Task Force 38, with an escort of three destroyers.

The United States squadron leaves for Trincomalee, Ceylon, on Thursday. — Reuter.

BRITAIN'S FLEET STILL FORMIDABLE

(Continued from Page 1)

administration would soon restore our naval strength and repulse throughout the world.

Mr. Churchill said the Government had taken the decision to reduce the navy personnel nearly three years ago instead of now, the Royal Navy would be now approaching a period when it would have something like a Home Fleet in commission again.

Mr. A. V. Alexander, the Minister of Defence, who spoke next, claimed that had Mr. Churchill's advice in 1945 been followed, the Fleet would have been in a disastrous position with not enough trained men left in the Navy today.

Replying to Mr. Churchill's criticism of scrapping of old battleships, Mr. Alexander said good use of the ships put into reserve had been made in the past but were those conditions likely to operate in another war?

To put the battleships Nelson and Rodney into a fit condition to go into reserve would cost £11,000,000 and £12,000,000. They would take up dockyard labour for the next three or four years.

CHURCHILL'S RETORT

Mr. Churchill: "I don't believe it at all. They could be placed in basins or roadsteads, where they might remain, without that expenditure."

Mr. Alexander replied: "We will not allow the Royal Navy to come to a position of weakness in which it would be unable to meet its commitments."

"We have accepted naval advice and taken full responsibility for it of the temporary immobilisation of certain ships, while we get more quickly to a balanced training force capable of manning the ships at an early date."

Regarding the possibility of manning, Mr. Alexander declared: "If we need a balanced task force to go to sea within one week to 10 days from now, it could be provided."

"I would like that to be known. It not only here—but to the world. It would very seriously interfere with the detailed technical scheme of training, but, nevertheless, it can be done and would, if necessary, be done."

EARL HOWE'S SUGGESTION

London, Mar. 8.—An Imperial Defence Conference on British naval strength was suggested by Earl Howe, Commander-in-Chief of the Royal Naval Reserve, in the House of Lords today.

He referred to the Government announcements on the scrapping of ships and asked: "Has the Government sought the view of the Dominions?"

He suggested steps might have been taken much earlier to prevent "a clash of interests" in the Falkland Islands.

"Why could we not have accepted the offer made by the Australian Government to send a cruiser," he asked.

"I had no doubts that Britain's failure to obtain reparations from Albania for the loss of so many British seamen when the destroyers Saururus and Volage were captured liberally mined in the Corfu Channel," made other nations think they could "twist the lion's tail with impunity."

"The Services—land, air and sea—must combine in one gigantic operation," and he hoped they would never again hear of troubles between wars when the Services seemed to be at loggerheads with one another. — Reuter.

CHECK YOUR KNOWLEDGE

Answers

1. A translation of the Hebrew Bible and the Greek New Testament into Latin. 2. A declaration signed by the master of a ship which carries goods at the owner's risk. 3. Sir Galahad. 4. The Scottish Highlanders. 5. France. 6. Leon Trotsky.

Although Administration officials assert they have no current plans for giving the Nanking Government military aid beyond what it has already received from United States army surplus, they do not rule out the possibility that such assistance may materialise as a result of the various factors at work on Congressional, official and public opinion.

Whether the State Department changes its stand on this question voluntarily or not, most informed observers believe that Congress is virtually certain to include military aid to the Chinese assistance programme despite Secretary of State George C. Marshall's desire that it be confined to commodities and reconstruction assistance.

Informed sources point out several factors which tend daily to increase the possibility of the United States putting more military equipment into the hands of the Nanking Government. One of these is the rapidly deteriorating military position of Chiang's army. Another is the impact of the testimony by Gen. Douglas MacArthur and Lt. Gen. Albert C. Wedemeyer to the House Foreign Affairs Committee, to the effect that military assistance would provide the only solution of the China problem.

Quiet Lobbying

Still another factor, and one not so widely recognized, is the fact that large United States business interests with financial stakes or potentialities in China are quietly lobbying to swing more Congressional sentiment behind large-scale aid for Chiang.

State Department officials, even that majority who strongly deplore the alleged "corruption and inefficiency" in the Chinese Government, are growing increasingly concerned over the reverses Chiang's legions have suffered on the battlefield in the past few months. According to these officials, the U.S. strategy at the time Gen. Marshall returned from his failure to mediate in the Chinese civil war was to adopt a more or less hands off policy with the idea that both sides would exhaust any significant advantage. The idea then was that both the Kuomintang and the Chinese Communists would be much more amenable to negotiations for a coalition government.

However, the past six months failed to bear out that thesis, and now even those officials most critical of the Kuomintang are beginning to admit that the United States cannot stand by and witness the collapse of the Chiang government. At least ever, so far they maintain, how-

St Teresa's To Build Parochial Hall

The St Teresa's Church Parochial Council has decided to revive the pre-war scheme of building a spacious parochial hall for the benefit of the community. It is to be built on the vacant Mission ground to the west of St Teresa's Church.

The Council, which consists of 15 members of St Teresa's Church, has been moved to resurrect the pre-war scheme to build the parochial hall by the Pope's recent appeals to "counteract the evils of materialism which so threatens Christian civilization and world peace."

It is planned to use the hall for all parochial associations, lecture courses, concerts, study circles, sports, social gatherings and other activities primarily aimed to give Catholics practical moral training.

It is estimated that the building will cost \$15,000 and the Parochial Council, the chairman of which is Father Granelli, has decided to launch a campaign for raising funds by means of subscriptions and collections taken outside of the church doors on Sundays.

Donors of \$5,000 will have their names empanelled within the precincts of the hall as "founders," and those who give \$1,000 or more will be recorded as "special subscribers."

The Hon. Treasurer of this fund is Mr. F. E. d'Almeida Remedios.

Truman Is A Candidate

Washington, Mar. 8.—President Truman said today through the Democratic national chairman, a Democrat this year if nominated by the party's National Convention.

Meanwhile at Honolulu the Star Bulletin said today that it learned reliably that President Truman has appointed Percy Hammond Johnson, a well-known businessman, as special chairman of the Chemical Bank and Trust Company, New York, to investigate China's financial situation.

The paper said Mr. Truman telephoned the banker, who is visiting his son in Honolulu. It said that Johnson who is in bed with a virus infection, declined to comment but that it was reliably informed that he would leave for China in a special military plane. — Associated Press.

publicly, that it can be kept alive by commodity help of the type envisaged in Gen. Marshall's proposed \$70,000,000 China aid programme.

Effect On Public Opinion

There are some signs of wavering on the part of the Administration regarding military aid, but most informed sources believe its endorsement of this type of assistance, if and when it comes, will not occur until the European recovery plan has been safely passed and there is no danger of increased aid to China being used to fund the Marshall plan.

Meanwhile, Gen. MacArthur's and Gen. Wedemeyer's advice to give Chiang more military aid, coming as it did at a time when Chiang's military fortunes are ebbing rapidly, and being tied in as it was with the concept of global strategy against Communism, appears to have had considerable effect on Congressional and public opinion.

After Gen. Marshall's admission that Communist domination of China north of the Yangtze would render the American position in Korea untenable and pose a "very serious problem" to the United States occupation forces in Japan, there have been increasing editorial inquiries as to why, in the light of that statement, the Administration continues to be adamant against bolstering Chiang with military aid.

Gen. Marshall's explanation, that economic aid will free some Chinese foreign exchange for the purchase of a limited amount of military equipment does not appear to have had much appreciable effect in calming the apprehensions of those who fear the repercussions of the defeat of Chiang.

Interested Observers

The representatives of big companies which have interests in Oriental economies are interested observers of every Congressional hearing on China aid. They make no secret of the fact that they are interested in seeing the United States China to attain peace and stability, which would be a requisite to their long-delayed plans for full resumption of activities in that area or, in some cases, expansion of activities.

Most informed sources believe that without the strength of Gen. Marshall's great personal prestige the Administration could not for so long have withstood various demands for more aid and military aid to China. Even that is not expected to prevent Congress from voting military aid into the China aid bill when Senators Styles Bridges and Robert Taft, together with Representatives who favour such action, bring full pressure to bear in favour of a larger China aid programme.

Meanwhile, in the debate over the question of military aid press, public and Congressional attention is at present being given to the question of whether the United States ought to attempt measures to assist in the stabilisation of the Chinese currency.

Silver-Based Currency

Assertions from such quarters as Representative Walter Judd of the editorial columns of the Washington Post and others, that a programme for restoring a silver basis of currency in China might be effective, have aroused no particular interest either in Congress or among the public so far. The fact that the Chinese are cool to any such idea, being reluctant to change even an inflated currency for one subject to the whims of the silver market, has contributed to the lack of interest on this score.

The Chinese idea that the United States might advance a loan to assist in the currency exchange equalisation Committee in Shanghai to maintain a more even keel in foreign transactions has been met with considerable official coolness. Most officials appear to believe it is but another type of currency loan and would result in nothing but giving the Chinese another line of credit without having any effect on either the exchange situation or the currency problem.

Military Aid Urged

Washington, Mar. 8.—Military aid for China is urged today by the Director-General of UNRRA.

Lowell W. Rooks, UNRRA chief, told the House Foreign Affairs Committee that economic aid alone is "useless" to the Chinese National Government in its war with the Chinese Reds. He said the United States should send American military men to China to equip, train, organize and direct Chinese forces "even down to tactics and strategy."

Rooks told the Committee that military and economic aid in China are equally important. One would be worthless without the other.

When asked what aid, if any, the Chinese Reds are getting from outside of China, Rooks said he could not say, but he has heard on good authority that a great amount of the military supplies the Russians had captured from the Chinese had turned up in Communist hands.

Didn't Like To Answer

Maj. Gen. E. E. Edgerton, former chief of the UNRRA China office, advocated economic aid for China. He was asked: "Do you think it is possible to give military aid without ultimately sending over American divisions?"

Edgerton said he would "like to answer" that question in an open session.

Gen. Claire Chennault, former chief of the Flying Tigers, arrived here today from China to give his views on what should be done there. He will probably appear before the Committee on Wednesday. — Associated Press.



"You must be doing something wrong, George. I can spank him without making him cry."

Fu Tso-Yi Smashes Red Threat West Of Peiping

Shanghai, Mar. 9.—Infantry and cavalry under General Fu Tso-yi routed a Communist force massed west of Peiping, easing temporarily the Red threat to the coal mines 20 miles west of Peiping, according to a Government communique today.

The outbreak of fighting near Peiping coincided with an announcement of the Red radio that the Communists plan to launch a spring offensive "soon." The Red radio said the Reds had completed winter training, and the armies in Shantung, North Kiangsu, Shan-shi, Chahar, Hopei, and Honan "will unfold a spring offensive soon."

The Red radio added that the armies under Generals Liu Po-cheng, Chen Yi and Chen Keng are "holding down 80 of a total of 160 Kuomintang brigades on the whole of the southern front."

News of the fighting at Szepingkai, 100 miles north of Mukden, continued to be confused. There is neither confirmation nor denial of reports that the city has fallen.

There are increasing signs that the government intends to launch a drive to recapture the port of Ying-kow soon. The air force has kept up constant aerial attacks. Naval units are reported to be gathering off-shore waiting for the attack signal.

Marshall Plan Action Promised

Washington, Mar. 8.—U.S. Secretary of State, Mr. George Marshall, was told on Monday that the House of Representatives would probably take action on the European recovery programme by April 10 or soon after.

The assurance was given to Mr. Marshall by the House speaker, Mr. C. Martin, when the Secretary of State called on him at the speaker's office yesterday.

With Mr. Marshall were the Under Secretary of State Robert Lovett and the U.S. Ambassador to Britain, Lewis H. Douglas.

Mr. Martin said aid to China was also discussed, but the main purpose of the visit was to plot a time table for European aid. — Associated Press.

POLICE FIRE ON STRIKERS

Kyrenia, Mar. 8.—The police opened fire when six lorries, carrying workmen, were attacked by strikers at the Mavrovouni copper mines today. Two men were wounded. It was stated.

The Pan-Cyprian Federation of Labour, however, called mass meetings in Nicosia tonight to protest against the death of a 50-year-old man, who, they said, "was killed today, while resisting strike-breakers."

Press reports that a striker was killed when the police opened fire were officially denied here tonight.

The strike at the copper mines began 45 days ago when the men demanded increased wages and a 40-hour week. — Reuter.

The Last Word About Hongkong?

Ottawa, Mar. 8.—The Canadian Government intends to table about 1,000,000 words of hitherto unpublished evidence on the defence of Hongkong in the House of Commons this week.

Only one copy of the evidence, taken by a Royal Commission in 1942, is being tabled because of the heavy printing cost.

Many Canadians were captured in the fighting before Hongkong fell to the Japanese. — Reuter.

U.N. BALKAN COMMISSION SHELLED

Athens, Mar. 8.—A detachment from the United Nations Balkan Commission was shelled in Macedonia, near the frontier, press reports from Salonika said today. No damage was done by the shelling, the reports added.

The Athens news agency quoted unconfirmed reports from Salonika that guerrillas had mined the railway line between Salonika and Kildis "in an attempt on the life of Major-General James Van Fleet, head of the military section of the American aid mission to Greece."

General Van Fleet, Brigadier Steel, the deputy head of the British mission in Greece, and General Yantzia, the Greek Chief of Staff, were expected back in Athens today from a tour of Northern Greece.

The Greek General Staff communique reported today that in the fighting on the Albanian border at Philates, where aircraft were supporting Government troops, the Government forces lost 34 dead between Thursday and Saturday.

Six officers and 28 other ranks were killed and three officers and 30 other ranks wounded.

In Central Macedonia, Government warplanes strafed guerilla positions. — Reuter.

SLAIN WOMEN IDENTIFIED

Saigon, Mar. 8.—The charred bodies of two American women, found with bullet wounds in the heads under the wreckage of their jeep on the road to Saigon Airport, were identified today by their jewellery.

They were Mrs. Jeanne Skewes, Director of the United States Information Service here, and Miss Lydia Ruth James, a secretary at the United States Consulate General.

French soldiers found the bodies three miles from town, when sent to investigate the sound of firing. The bodies were under the jeep behind a screen of bamboo bushes in the bed of a dried-up river.

The assassins had set fire to the jeep.

The spot where the bodies were found is outside the security zone established by the French authorities. Both the French and American authorities are investigating. — Reuter.

"HOCH" KILLS NINE PEOPLE

Berlin, Mar. 8.—Nine persons died and six others lost their sight after drinking methyl alcohol in a Leipzig suburb during the spring fair, the French licensed newspaper Der Kurier reported yesterday.

Twenty-four persons, including 12 members of the Russian Occupation Forces were sent to hospital after drinking the mixture, the paper said.

Three cafes, were closed as a result and all owners and waiters arrested. — Associated Press.

DEATH OF MOSLEM RESIDENT

The death occurred early this morning of Hajee Moosa Azim, one of the oldest members of the Moslem community. Mr. Azim, formerly of the Treasury, was 75 years of age. The funeral will take place at the Mohammedan Cemetery at 5.15 p.m. today.

NOTICE TO ADVERTISERS

Advertisers are requested to note that not less than 24 hours notice prior to the day of publication should be given for all commercial advertisements, change of copy etc. Notices and Classified Advertisements will be received until 4.30 p.m. for the following day.

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NOTICE
THE "STAR" FERRY CO., LTD.

Notice To Shareholders

NOTICE is hereby given that the forty-sixth Ordinary Yearly Meeting of the Members of this Company will be held at the Office of Messrs. Jardine, Matheson & Co., Ltd., on Wednesday the 17th day of March, 1948, at Noon, to receive the Report of the Board of Directors and Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31st December, 1947, to elect Directors and to appoint Auditors.

Notice is also given that the Transfer Books of the Company will be closed from the 4th March, 1948, to the 17th March, 1948, both days inclusive.

By Order of the Board of Directors,
C. E. TERRY,
Manager & Secretary.
Hongkong, 20th February, 1948.

They Answered the Call

Have You?
Send your donation to the

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POSITIONS WANTED

ENGLISHMAN, 20, single, matriculated, 12 months with R.A.F. in Hong Kong (1943-46) desires return immediately to business career in Colony. 5 years experience of public library, bookkeeping and R.A.F. Information Room administration. Keen, plenty of initiative and organising ability. Easily adaptable to world of commerce. Excellent references. Box 112, Hong Kong Telegraph.

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